

REMARKS

Claims 10-22 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 10-22 are added and claims 1-9 are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter contained therein. New claims 10-22 are supported by the specification at least at page 17, line 7 through page 20, line 15 and Figs. 1, 2 and 6. No new matter is added. Reconsideration in light of the amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

The Office Action rejects claims 1-9 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 7,238,454 to Kobayashi et al. ("Kobayashi"). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 1-9 are canceled rendering this rejection moot. However, for the reasons discussed below, Kobayashi fails to disclose and would not have rendered obvious the features of claims 10-22.

Claim 10 recites the supported region being located inside the unnecessary region of the substrate peripheral edge on the main surface of the substrate, and the supported region being a region supported by a substrate holding member of an exposure device when a transfer is carried out by using the transfer mask, wherein the resist film is not formed in the supported region of the mask blank.

Claim 14 recites the supported region being located inside the unnecessary region of the substrate peripheral edge on the main surface of the substrate, and the supported region being a region supported by a substrate holding member of an exposure device when a transfer is carried out by using the transfer mask.

Claim 17 recites that the supported region of the mask blank, which is located inside the unnecessary region of the substrate peripheral edge on the main surface of the substrate, is

a region to be supported by a substrate holding member of an exposure device when a transfer is carried out by using the transfer mask.

Claim 21 recites that a supported region of the transfer mask, which is located inside an unnecessary region of the substrate peripheral edge on the main surface of the substrate, and is supported by a substrate holding member of an exposure device when a transfer is carried out by using the transfer mask, wherein the thin film is not formed in the supported region of the transfer mask.

Kobayashi fails to disclose at least these features of independent claims 10, 14, 17 and 21. Specifically, Kobayashi fails to disclose at least that the supported region of the mask blank is located inside an unnecessary region of a substrate peripheral edge on the main surface of the substrate.

Moreover, it is disclosed in Example 1 of the present specification and Figs. 1 and 2 that the "supported region" is a region of over 10 mm from the side surface of the substrate and that the "unnecessary region" is a region of about 2 mm from the side surface of the substrate.

In contrast, in Kobayashi, the unnecessary resist removal area 10 (alleged unnecessary region) removed in the portion of the edge of the substrate is clearly described to be in "the range of 1.9 mm to 2.1 mm of the edge of the substrate" on Table 2 in Kobayashi. Because Kobayashi's Fig. 3 only shows a single unnecessary resist removal area 10, Kobayashi fails to show any alleged supporting area inside the unnecessary resist removal area 10. In Kobayashi, the unnecessary resist removal area 10 is only in the edge of the substrate.

As recited in the features of the independent claims, the resist film is not formed on the supported region or the resist film formed on it is removed before an etching process causes the thin film for the transfer pattern formed in "the supported region" to be certainly removed by the etching process.

For all the above reasons, Kobayashi fails to teach or render obvious at least the supported region being located inside the unnecessary region of the substrate peripheral edge on the main surface of the substrate, as recited in independent claim 10, and similarly recited in independent claims 14, 17 and 21.

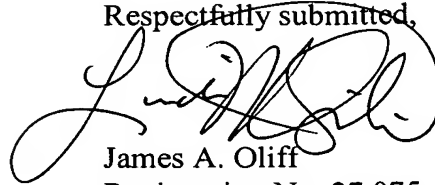
For all the above reasons, it is respectfully requested that the rejection be withdrawn.

For at least the foregoing reasons, Kobayashi fails to have rendered obvious the combination of all features recited in independent claims 10, 14, 17 and 21. Further, because Kobayashi fails to teach or render obvious all the features recited in independent claims 10, 14, 17 and 21, dependent claims 11-13, 15, 16, 18-20 and 22 also would not have been rendered obvious by Kobayashi for at least the respective dependence of these claims on allowable base claims, as well as for the separately patentable subject matter that the claims recite. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of the claims are respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of the claims are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



James A. Oliff
Registration No. 27,075

Linda M. Saltiel
Registration No. 51,122

JAO:JSP/jfb

Attachments:

Request for Continued Examination
Amendment Transmittal

Date: January 15, 2010

OLIFF & BERRIDGE, PLC
P.O. Box 320850
Alexandria, Virginia 22320-4850
Telephone: (703) 836-6400

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